

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 2, 6-9, 14, 19, 29 and 30 are amended. Upon entry, claims 1-30 are presented for reconsideration by the Examiner.

The current invention as defined by the amended claims relates to an improved design for a computer mouse. The mouse features at least one receptacle for receiving at least one fingertip extending from a button positioned near the front of the mouse. In a preferred embodiment, the mouse features two receptacles—one for receiving the computer user's index finger and one for receiving the middle finger. The receptacles are designed such that they provide a pocket-like structure for the fingers when the hand is in a natural relaxed state with slightly bent or curved fingers. This pocket-like structure of the receptacles provides a contact lip surface on virtually all sides of the received fingers. The resistance of the contact lip surface enables the computer user to navigate the mouse by flexing his index and middle fingers without actually gripping the mouse, thus reducing the stress level in his hand and improving the mouse's overall ergonomics.

Another embodiment includes additional buttons on the rear side of the finger receptacles, each positioned to contact the fingerprint sides of the user's index and middle fingertips when they are positioned in the receptacle. These buttons can be actuated by the user rather easily by gripping the sides of the mouse and bending the index or middle finger toward the palm.

Another embodiment is directed to mounting a receptacle having the shape of a fingertip to an upper surface of a button.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 9-13, 24 and 26-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Japanese Patent No. JP 08-234903 to Kohei (hereinafter "Kohei"). Applicant respectfully traverses.

First, Applicant has amended Claims 1 and 2 to further distinguish the finger receptacles of the present invention from the recessed area in the mouse taught by Kohei. As amended Claims 1 and 2 indicate, in the current invention, the finger receptacles are designed to provide a contact lip surface on virtually every side of the user's index and middle fingers when the fingers are inserted into them, including the rear side (See Claim 1: "...a contact lip surface at generally transversely opposed sides and at generally longitudinally opposed portions of a received index fingertip..."). Kohei's device only provides an edge or lip on the right and left portions and the front portion of the crevice. Each embodiment of Kohei's device lacks a lip surface or any other structure that provides resistance on the rear side of the finger crevices (see Drawings 4 and 5). Consequently, when using Kohei's mouse, the user would unquestionably be required to move his arm or wrist toward his body in order to effect downward movement of the pointer on the computer screen.

In contrast to Kohei, one of the present device's fundamental features is the shape of the finger receptacle that provides a lip surface or other structure providing resistance in generally longitudinally opposed edges (i.e., on both the

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finger nail and fingerprint side of the fingers) when the fingers are inserted slightly bent. This design allows simple movement of the mouse in all directions without the user having to move his arm or grip the mouse on the outer edges. Unlike in Kohei's device, the structure of the present invention allows the user to effect downward movement of the pointer simply by bending his index and/or middle fingers toward his palm. Consequently, Kohei does not teach each and every limitation of Claims 1 and 2 and the claims are allowable over Kohei.

Claims 2-28, which depend directly or indirectly on amended claim 1, are patentable for the reasons advanced for amended claim 1.

Additionally, the Examiner rejected Claims 3, 4, 5, 8, 14-23 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Kohei in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,348,912 to Smith (hereinafter "Smith"). Applicant has amended Claims 14 and 19 and respectfully traverses the rejections.

The Examiner used Smith for the disclosures of "additional buttons" and a scroll wheel disposed between the primary receptacle and secondary receptacle. However, although both references teach a type of computer mouse, there exists no motivation to combine the references to yield the present invention. As discussed above, Kohei does not disclose a finger receptacle with a rear lip. Additionally, Smith fails to teach any sort of finger receptacle, let alone one with a rear lip surface. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would never be motivated to combine Smith with Kohei to create a mouse with additional buttons on a rear lip of a finger receptacle. Consequently, Claims 14 and 19 cannot be

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properly rejected by Kohei in view of Smith. Claims 15-18, 20-23 and 25 depend from Claims 14 and 19, and are therefore allowable as a matter of law.

Similarly, it is clear that the combination of Kohei and Smith does not yield the device recited in the present claims. As indicated above, Kohei clearly does not teach each and every element of the present invention with exception to the scroll wheel and additional buttons. Kohei fails to disclose a lip surface that provides resistance on the rear side of the finger receptacle (i.e. the edge on the fingerprint side of the finger). Therefore, even if a skilled artisan were to look to Smith in an effort to improve Kohei, the resulting combination would not generate the present device because the rear lip surface would be absent. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw his rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103 of Claims 3, 4, 5, 8, 14-23 and 25.

Furthermore, regarding Claims 17 and 22, neither Kohei, Smith, nor their combination teaches a device wherein the user's fingertip(s) contact(s) both the front portion of the finger receptacle(s) and a portion of the additional button(s). Kohei does not even teach a rear lip surface on its finger crevices, let alone a rear lip surface that contacts the user's fingertip when his finger is inserted into the receptacle.

Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of claims 29 and 30.

Claim 29 recites as follows (emphasis added):

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29. A computer mouse for a computer system, wherein said mouse has a casing with at least one button depressible relative to said casing and disposed at an upper portion thereof to generate a signal to the computer, characterized in that a molded component is mounted to an upper surface of the button and is configured to form a receptacle having the shape of a fingertip of a user.

None of the references cited by the Examiner included the Kohei reference disclose, teach or suggest a molded component that is mounted to an upper surface of the button and is configured to form a receptacle having the shape of a fingertip of a user. In this regard, the cited Kohei reference does not disclose the molded component mounted to the upper surface of the button.

Support for claims 29 and 30 is found in Figs. 11 and 12 and paragraph [0068].

Likewise, claim 30, which depends on claim 29 is patentable for the reason advanced for claim 29. In addition, the Kohei reference does not disclose a molded component mounted to an upper surface of each of two buttons.

For the reasons discussed herein, Applicant contends that the Examiner's rejections were improper and respectfully request that the present claims be passed to issuance.

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